



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**Frank J. Magill,
United States Attorney**

David Anderson, Public Affairs Specialist
(612) 664-5684; cell: (612) 730-2251

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2008

3 sentenced for distributing methamphetamine

The last of three men was sentenced yesterday in federal court in connection with a methamphetamine distribution operation.

Juan Manuel Estrada, 34, no permanent address, was sentenced to 360 months in prison and 10 years supervised release on one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute in excess of 500 grams of methamphetamine. Estrada was sentenced Sept. 15 in St. Paul by United States District Court Judge Patrick Schiltz.

Estrada was convicted by a federal jury on Nov. 29, 2007, following a two-day trial. He was indicted, along with two other defendants, on June 27, 2007. Those other defendants were each charged and pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy, and each was sentenced on May 28.

Eduardo Soto, 37, Minneapolis, was sentenced to 190 months in prison and five years supervised release, and Oscar Javier Estrada, 31, Minneapolis, was sentenced to 48 months in prison and three years supervised release. Soto, also known as Dionesa Iram Garcia-Estrada, pleaded guilty on Nov. 2, 2007, and Oscar Estrada pleaded guilty on Oct. 4, 2007.

According to their respective plea agreements, from December 2006 through June 4, 2007, the three men conspired to possess with intent to distribute 500 or more grams of methamphetamine, a highly addictive and dangerous drug.

According to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) affidavit, officers began investigating the operation in May 2007 and observed Soto making several visits to a Minneapolis residence. On June 4, 2007, officers observed Soto and Oscar Estrada leaving the residence.

Police followed their vehicle and stopped them in Brooklyn Park after observing a traffic violation. A trained drug-detecting dog was used and indicated a positive alert in the center of the dashboard. A search was conducted, and officers recovered approximately 1 ½ pounds of methamphetamine and a semi-automatic pistol in a hidden compartment from behind the dash. Both men were arrested.

During the execution of a search warrant at the Minneapolis residence at approximately 11:45 p.m. on June 4, officers found Juan Estrada, along with many hand-written notes listing drug amounts and corresponding prices, approximately \$1,000 in cash, a large quantity of ammunition, a large quantity of discarded cellophane wrapping which tested positive for methamphetamine, plastic ziplock bags, a heat-sealing machine and approximately 1 ½ pounds of methamphetamine.

More than one year prior to the search warrant, Juan Estrada had been stopped by the Nevada Highway Patrol and when his vehicle was searched, troopers discovered more than \$100,000 in cash hidden in his vehicle's radiator.

This case was the result of an investigation by the DEA, the Nevada Highway Patrol and the Sherburne County Drug Task Force, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew R. Winter.